

## “Some Lessons in Faith”

### The Christological Pattern of the Christian Life

Mark 5:21-43

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**Jeff:** Father, we’re thankful that we can come before You today. We know that You are the living God and the only God, and the privilege it is to be called to You, not only to serve You but to be Your sons and daughters, is great. So we bow before You this morning to acknowledge Your greatness and Your kindness, Your love and Your mercy toward us, expressed in Jesus Christ. We’re thankful for Your Spirit who indwells us and who has indeed opened our eyes to see the wonder of Christ.

Father, we pray now that You will hear our prayers of thanksgiving. But not only that. We pray that You’ll hear our pleas not only on behalf of Bruce, but for Sarah, and for Gregg and Chuck and for Tab and for Gil. And Father, we pray for each one of these and commit them to You, knowing that You know each one of them not only by name, but Father, You knit them together even when they were in their mother’s womb. And so we pray as we commit them to You that You would give them exactly what they need in heart and mind and physical well-being and in spirit.

Father, we ask and pray that You’ll teach us this morning from Your word and by Your Spirit. And we pray, Father, that we would be changed because of it, different from even this morning. And Father, we pray that that change would be conformity to the image of Christ Jesus our Lord. And it’s in His name that we pray. Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Well why don’t you turn with me to Mark chapter 5? We’re going to continue our work in the passage that we started with last week. And I’ll get to that reading in just a minute.

I want us to think about the structure of the text before we get to the actual reading of the text. I do have one change on your outlines. I have the question “What is faith?” in the introduction. I want you to just consider that moved down to the first point. So just so you know, that’s going to get moved.

Let’s look at the outline for today. The outline for today is simply an introduction. Like I said, I want to take you through the structure of the text. I want us to think about what we’re going to be reading before we read it.

And then I want to consider three things—*what faith requires*. It requires us overcoming fear. We’ll talk about what that means. *Faith requires a right object*. And then we’re going to learn some lessons from the text about *faith itself*.

So with that in mind, let’s get started. And I want you to just think about the end of chapter 4. The end of chapter 4 is a great text. I mean, it’s one of those texts that you just absolutely love. If you’re into Mark’s Gospel and some of the other Gospels that record this story. This is the story of when Jesus was teaching the crowds, and the disciples took Him just as He was. Remember that expression? “*They took Him just as He was.*” And oftentimes, when you hear that preached, it turns into that the disciples took Him just as

## *“Some Lessons in Faith”*

He was, and it’s more of an expression about their faith and how they took Him. But really, that’s not the case at all.

Let me tell you what that means. That means that He was already in the boat. So they took Him just as He was, you know. Isn’t that funny? I mean, we can make a lot out of that, when there is really not a lot to be made out of that.

But *“they took Him just as He was.”* He was in the boat. And one of the things that He decided to do was to lay down and take a nap. When He was in the midst of His nap, a storm came out on the sea. It’s a terrible storm. And remember, they woke Him up and He calms the sea.

And two things happen at the end of that story. Two questions are asked. Jesus asks the first question. He asks this. *“Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”*

Now that’s important. I just want you to hold on to that question. *“Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”* In fact, I want to narrow that down for you, and I want you to think of two things out of that—*fear and faith; fear and belief*—all the same thing, fear and faith.

The second question is not asked by Jesus, but it’s asked by the disciples. *“Who is this?” “Who is this, that the wind and the waves obey Him?”*

Now you say to me, *“Why in the world do you want to start here? Why do you want to start with these two questions?”* Well I’ll tell you why. These two questions are transitional. And what do I mean by that? I mean that sometimes it’s not just the stories themselves in Scripture that communicate something to us. Sometimes it’s the way those stories are ordered. Sometimes part of the message comes to us in the way in which the stories are put together and knit together, because they are knit together in such a way by the Holy Spirit, leading the authors of Scripture to communicate something as well.

What do I want you to see? First of all, I want you to see this. Chapter 5 opens up, and what happens? A demoniac comes running down the edge of the cliff. And what does he say? He says, *“What have You to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?”*

Now I want you to think about this. What was the question that was asked by the disciples? *“Who is this?”* The demoniac answers the question.

All right. This morning’s text, 5:21 and following, answers the fear and the faith question. And what I want you to see is that this particular section of text is something of a chasm. You know what a chasm is.

**Participant:** No. *(Laughter)*

**Second Participant:** Is it a very exciting kayak ride? *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** A chasm is a kayak ride. *(Laughter)* Thank you. No, a chasm is a structure, a literary structure, that goes something like this. It goes statement A., statement B. And then statement B. is repeated, and then statement A. is repeated. Let me give it to you like this.

**Participant:** Abba.

**Jeff:** Yes, it’s Abba. Please don’t ever mention that again. *(Laughter)* I want you to know that one of the things my wife and I lament are the ‘70s songs that we had to listen to growing up in the back seat of our parents’ car. And that’s coming back.

**Participant:** What were you doing in the back seat of your parents’ car? *(Laughter)*

## *“Some Lessons in Faith”*

**Jeff:** Singing with my brother with my ears bleeding, you know? *(Laughter)* I wanted to tell you something. That’s coming back, and when you go to weddings and places like that, they’re playing that ‘70s dance music. And my wife and I will look at each other lie, you know, we’re starting to twitch and everything. Anyway—*(Laughter)* Hey, thanks a lot!

**Participant:** You’re over it now.

**Jeff:** Okay, Abba. So here’s an example of it. It’s an easy one. I want a peanut better—there’s my A., and jelly—there’s my B.—sandwich. A jelly—there’s my B., and peanut butter—there’s my A.—sandwich I want. Okay. A-B., B-A.

So what do you have? You have “Why are you so fearful?” “Why do you have no faith?” “Who is this?” That was at the end of chapter 4. Then “You are Jesus, the Son of the Most High God.” There’s your answer to B. And then our text is going to be an answer to the question of fear and faith. And so there’s you’re a.

And so the Holy Spirit leading this man is really getting us to see two particular questions. Who is Jesus? And how is it that He helps us to overcome fear in faith? So that’s the story that we’re going to look at. I’m going to look at the text this morning. So let’s go there. I’ll read it to you this morning from 5:21 and following. We’ll read through 43.

Brothers, I want you to know something. One of my chief joys as a pastor is to remind anyone I teach, and those to whom I preach, that this is the word of God. There are all kinds of words today being thrown about. This is the only word wherein you have a safe place to stand.

**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** It is the word of God. Let me read it to you.

*“And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about Him, and He was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name. And seeing Him, he fell at his feet, imploring Him earnestly, saying, ‘My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.’ And He went with him.*

*“And a great crowd followed Him and thronged about Him. And there was a woman.”*

Now let me just pause a second. Not only do we see the chiasm here, but we also see a narrative sandwich here. You see an inclusio You see this story about Jairus opened up, and it bookends now with the story about the woman. Okay?

*“And a great crowd followed Him and thronged about Him. And there was a woman who had a discharge of blood for about twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians and had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up from behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment, for she said, ‘If I touch even His garments, I will be made well.’ And immediately the flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.*

*“And Jesus perceived in Himself that power had gone out from Him. Immediately he turned about in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched My garments?’ And His disciples said*

## **“Some Lessons in Faith”**

to Him, ‘You see the crowd pressing around You, and yet You say, ‘Who touched me?’ And he looked around to see who had done it.

“But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your disease.’

“While He was still speaking, there came from the ruler’s house someone who said, ‘Your daughter is dead; why trouble the Teacher any further?’ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, ‘Do not fear; only believe.’ And He allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John, the brother of James.

“They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue. And Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when He had entered, He said to them, ‘Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead, but sleeping.’ And they laughed at Him. But He put them all outside and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with Him, and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand, He said to her, ‘Talitha kumi,’ which means, ‘Little girl, I say to you, arise!’ And immediately the girl got up and began walking, for she was twelve years of age. And they were immediately overcome with amazement. And He strictly charged them that no one should know this. And He told them to give her something to eat.”

**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** All right.

**Participant:** Why did He say that no one should know this, and why is that written there?

**Jeff:** Hey, Abba! *(Laughter)* We’ll get there. *(Laughter)* Some guys, you know? *(Laughter)* I’m telling you! *(Laughter)*

All right. We need to start with a more basic question. *What is faith?* I think faith could be one of those things that we think about much in the same category as eternity. Augustine said that we all know what eternity is until someone asks us.

What is faith? Well, faith could be as simple as saying, “It’s my response to God.” Or we could say something like a Reformational type of response. We could say that faith is *kat* spelled with a k.

It’s *knowledge*. I have to know something about my faith. It’s *assent*. I have to assent to the knowledge that I have about the object of my faith. And it’s *trust*. I have to put my trust in what I know and that to which I assent.

And so it could be *kat* spelled with a k. That’s the traditional understanding of faith, a Reformational understanding of it.

But I just want to give you some highlights from the Westminster Confession of Faith as to what faith is. For instance, faith is grace. Faith is not something that I work up. It’s my response, but it’s not something that I initiate. It’s something that God initiates in me, that I might respond. And so faith is a grace. My whole response to God is a grace. It’s a gift.

And then not only that. The Westminster Confession says, “*The principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving and resting on Christ alone for justification, sanctification,*” and all else. All of those other benefits that we receive from the covenant

## *“Some Lessons in Faith”*

of grace are received by the divinely initiated response of mine called faith, okay? So the principal acts are *“accepting, receiving and resting in Christ alone.”*

And then it’s our response. And so faith oftentimes varies in degree. Sometimes my faith is weak, sometimes my faith is strong. The beautiful thing about saving faith, though, is that whether my faith is weak or strong, it lays hold of the whole Christ. In other words, my faith may be weak. And I may have a sense of the weakness of my faith. I may say it like this. I may say, “I feel as if God has drawn away from me,.” Or “I feel as if I’m far from God.”

And that would be the better way to say it, because you are far from God. God has not withdrawn. Your faith is weak and you need to draw near to Him in the strengthening of your faith. And how do you do that? Well, you do it by appealing to Him, and then the means of grace.

Well that’s what we mean when we talk about faith. What is faith? Those are some basic components of faith. But here’s the question that we need to ask ourselves. What fear does this faith overcome? Because here’s the thing about it. We know that *“perfect love drives out all fear.”* But not all fear. I mean, we don’t want love to drive out godly fear, do we? There is a fear that is good. Godly fear is a good thing. Not all fear is bad.

So we need to ask ourselves specifically. What fear does faith overcome? Here’s the question that we really need to ask. We need to ask this. Does the text tell us what kind of fear faith overcomes? And the answer to that is yes. The text tells us what kind of fear faith overcomes. What is it?

**Participant:** 4:40.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Mark 4:40. *“He said to them, ‘Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?’”*

**Jeff:** 4:40. It’s cowardice. That’s the word for cowardice. Interestingly enough, it’s not the typical word for fear, *phobia*. That’s not the word that’s here in the text. The word that’s here in the text, when Jesus asks the disciples, *“Why are you so afraid?”*, He’s asking them, “Why are you so cowardly?”

Let me give you an example of that. Let me tell you what kind of cowardice I have in mind. We all know Kenny Rogers—thanks again!—remember “The Coward of the County?” Oh, man! (*Laughter*) Please, make it stop! (*Laughter*) Anyway, time out, you know?

I may have told you this story before. I was rock climbing with a friend of mine. We weren’t super-experienced rock climbers. We’d rock climbed for a number of years. But we were always in the main top ropers.

But we decided to go on this one face that went up. And then it had a ceiling. It went out and then it went up again. And my friend was obviously, clearly, the better climber. There were three or four of us. He was the better climber of all of us. And also he had a lot more pride.

And he said, “I’m going to go first. I’m going to take this first. I’ll show you guys how to do it.”

I said, “Okay. Go ahead.”

## *“Some Lessons in Faith”*

So he shimmies up, and he gets up to the ceiling, right? And he gets up, and there’s a little kind of a divot that ran along where the face went up, and then the ceiling went up. And he wedged himself in there. I mean he wedged himself in there! And then he wouldn’t move. You know, it was like a minute, and we’re going, “Hey, all right! Ya ready?”

Nothing. You know, five minutes. “You okay?”

Nothing. We didn’t hear anything from him. Ten minutes went by! Listen to me! Forty-five minutes went by! And by forty-five minutes, you know what we’re doing. We’re going, “Hey, are you a girl or what?” (*Laughter*) Don’t tell your wives that, right? (*Laughter*)

Anyway, so you know, he finally comes down. And I said, “Patrick, what happened up there?”

And he said, “I don’t know. I just got paralyzed and I couldn’t move.

I said, “Were you afraid?” And he just kind of smiled and shook his head. But that’s what happened. For me, when I think of this word, that’s the picture that always comes to mind. That’s paralysis in the face of an object that elicits fear in me.

You know, it’s interesting, because it doesn’t have to be a rock face, does it? It can be a little spider, can’t it? It can be a mouse for our wives. And isn’t it interesting that the object of our fear doesn’t even have to be material. It can be something that hasn’t even happened yet, but something that we fear might happen. That’s called anxiety.

Isn’t that interesting? And this is what Jesus is saying. Jesus is saying to the disciples, “Why are you so cowardly?”

And you know what? That grips us all, every one of us. That really gets to the heart.

All right. Why is this so bad? It’s so bad because it means that whatever the object of our fear happens to be, that is our master, and not Jesus.

Jesus is in the boat. He’s the Son of God. And a storm blows up, and it becomes the disciples’ master. It all of a sudden becomes the disciple to the disciples, and not Jesus.

And Jesus is saying, “Why are you so cowardly?” In other words, why did you allow that to become your master?

Now here’s the thing. We may not think that this is a terrible thing. But I want to tell you how terrible this is. Revelation 21:8. You know, as soon as you put up Revelation, it’s an intimidating book, right? I want to share this; this is so important that I put it up here. This is what it says. “*But as for the cowardly, the faithless.*” Isn’t that interesting? Those two words are put together. Fear and faith, cowardice and faithlessness.

“*But as for the cowardly, the faithless, ... their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur.*” Wow! Wow!

Why? You know, in one sense we feel bad for the coward at some level, right? I mean, we even step up for the coward. We protect them to some degree or other. We feel bad for them.

No, no, no! The coward is an idolater because that which he fears is his master. And so “*the cowardly and the faithless, ... their portion shall be that which burns in the lake of fire.*” Faith rejects this kind of fear.

## *“Some Lessons in Faith”*

Now in this story we have two different people. And we have the same lesson being taught to both of them, because both of them fear. Both of them are in jeopardy of becoming cowards. That’s the point of the story.

You remember when I said that our story is going to answer the question. This is the question being answered. *“Why are you so afraid?”* “Why do you have no faith?” “Who is this?” The answer: “You are the Son of the Most High God.” And now this text is going to ask the question about fear and faith. Are you seeing that now? Okay.

Let’s talk about the woman first. And let’s talk about her first because it’s ladies first, right? Let’s think about her situation. This poor woman is in a terrible pickle. For years, over a decade, she has been experiencing an issue of blood. And the problem is that she has gone to physicians to make her well, and physicians have failed her. In fact, some of them have actually worsened her condition.

But not only that. Here is a woman who in the light of the Law is unclean. Now I want you to think about this. Here’s a woman who is experiencing deep pain, likely embarrassment. How do you not have accidents with this kind of problem? How do you not?

So there’s embarrassment and humiliation. And on top of that, she’s unclean. What she has to report is that she is unclean and unable to participate in certain ceremonial activities. And so if people didn’t know it before because she was able to hide it from them, they know it now.

So this woman is having a terrible, terrible time. But she hears that Jesus is a great Healer. And so she decides that what she’s going to do is that she’s going to go and visit Jesus. And she says to herself,--and you’ve heard the story—“all I have to do is go up to this Man and touch His robe, touch Him in some way , just touch the tassels of His robe, and I’ve heard that I will be healed.”

Now think about this. The crowds are pressing around Jesus. The crowds are pressing around Him, and she makes her way up through the middle of the crowd.

And you’ve got to have this in mind. This woman with this issue of blood is making all of these clean people unclean because she’s touching them as she works her way through the crowd. And she makes her way to Jesus.

And she just touches the tassel of His robe. And wonder of wonders, she feels something happen to her inside! She knows that she’s been made well!

Now what has she got to do? You know, mission accomplished! “All I’ve got to do is stealth retreat, to start my life from the beginning and work forward. This is great! We’ll figure out the details later on.”

And then the worst happens. Jesus calls her out! *“Who touched My garments?”*, right?

Now you and I know that we’re like the disciples. “We just saw you calm the storm. You’re the Son of God. And you don’t know?” Or, at the worst, “Look at all these people! You’re going to ask, ‘Who touched Me?’” You know, that sort of thing, right? *“Who touched My garments?”*

Jesus is doing this for the sake of this woman. I want you to think about this. He’s doing this for the sake of this woman because she’s in jeopardy of becoming a coward. And cowardice leads to hell.

## ***“Some Lessons in Faith”***

I want you to look at Mark 5:33 and 34 a minute. *“But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.”*

I want to read something to you out of the Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 14. This is the section on saving faith. This is in Section II. I’ll just start from the beginning and draw your attention to it.

It says, *“By this faith a Christian believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein, and acts differently upon that which each particular passage thereof contains.”*

Here are the ways in which faith acts when it hears passages: *“yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come.”*

Think about that. Yielding obedience, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises. What does this woman do? She trembles with fear and falls down at the feet of the Lord.

Her fear now is an appropriate godly fear. She trembles at the right things. She’s no longer a coward. She’s a godly woman who is placing her faith in the Lord. So it’s a wonderful thing.

Now let’s hurry on to the synagogue ruler. The synagogue ruler is in a dire way. I want you to think about this here for a second.

The synagogue ruler goes to Jesus. Why? Because his daughter is ill. And you need to think about this. This would not have put him in the good graces of the religious—the Pharisees, the Scribes. This would have put him on the outs with them. He’s putting himself at ecclesiastical risk.

Now he goes to Jesus. *“This is my daughter. You need to come to her. I know You can make her well. Come.”* And Jesus goes.

And then he gets stopped by this woman with the issue of blood. And then somebody comes out of the synagogue ruler’s house and says to the synagogue ruler, *“look, your daughter is dead.”*

Now I want you to think about that just for a minute. What does the synagogue ruler do at this point? Does he go back to his buddies in the synagogue and does he say to them, *“Look! I had a moment of insanity. For a moment, you know,—I’m her father! This is my daughter! I was holding out hope beyond hope that maybe, by a last-ditch effort, that He might be able to. But I don’t know what came over me. Can you forgive me for that?”* You know, that sort of thing, right?

Do you know what I mean? I’m sure you know what I mean. I want you to know something. Can you imagine what it was like to be the people who had to come out and tell him that his daughter was dead? You know, that’s a terrible thing to have to do.

I remember my brother-in-law, when I told you about him dying. I had to break the news to some people in my wife’s family. It’s a terrible thing to have to do. It’s hard.

But you see, Jesus just looks at this man and He recognizes the position that this man is in. And what does He say? *“Do not fear; only believe.”* Have faith.

## ***“Some Lessons in Faith”***

There it is. There’s what we’re dealing with—fear and faith. Do not enter into cowardice. Have faith.

Now I want you to think about this, men. Think about what I read to you out of the Confession. What does faith do? It *“trembles at the threatenings.”* It *“yields to the commands.”* It *“embraces the promises.”*

What is this man’s option? This man’s option is to yield to the command. Do not be afraid, but have faith, and *“embrace the promises.”* That’s what his options were.

And what does he do? I’m going to talk more about this man in just a second. But what does he do? Well, we know that he yields to the command, and he embraces the promise.

Here’s the question I want to ask you. The question I want to ask you is, do you need to hear this message, this talk, this morning? My guess is that you do. My guess is that everyone of us struggles with some sort of fear.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Yes. It always seeks to encroach itself on us and overcome us. Do you realize this? If you go to a website,—and I don’t remember what it’s called,—but if you type in “The Phobia List,” it will come up. It’s a guy who has kept track, and from medical journals and popular usage, he’s kept track of all the phobias that are out there in our world today. And the last count of the named phobias is 530!

You know, we used to talk about living in a culture of death. I think we live in a culture of fear. And did you ever drive behind that big truck with the big wheels on it? And it’s going rumble-rumble-rumble! It’s got no fear. Fearless! Do you know why he has that on there? Because he’s terrified! (*Laughter*) He’s terrified. So he’s trying to keep you at bay, because he’s brave. Everybody’s afraid of something.

**Participant:** Should we still call ourselves The Brave Men? (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** Well, you know what?

**Participant:** I have an answer for that. (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** I do too, Sig, and I’m going to let you give it in just a minute. But John Wayne used to say,—

**Participant:** All right! I remember that!

**Jeff:** “Courage is being afraid, but saddling up anyway.”

**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** So yeah, you should. (*Laughter*) What’s your answer to that?

**Sig:** We are cowards.

**Jeff:** Yes. Go-ahead.

**Participant:** We are.

**Sig:** The only reason we’re brave is because of Christ.

**Jeff:** Wow! Yes, that’s right. He’s redeemed us from our cowardice. That’s right.

**Participant:** Jeff?

**Jeff:** Yes, please?

**Participant:** The fear though, it’s that this all takes place in a crowd. In context, would they have been afraid if it was one on one encounter, and not so much of a crowd around them, with the pressure?

## *“Some Lessons in Faith”*

**Jeff:** Yes, that’s something with the man. Hold on just a second. *Faith rests in the right object.* I’m only going to take a few minutes with this point. Which is correct? You tell me. Which of these statements is correct? My faith in Christ saved me from my sin?, or Christ saved me from my sin through faith? Which is correct?

**Men:** The latter.

**Participant:** Christ saved me.

**Jeff:** Yes. The second one is correct. Our faith does not save us. Christ saves us through the instrumentation of faith. And even that is a gift from Him. So faith rests in Christ because Christ is the One who saves.

So here’s the question that we have to ask when we deal with these two people. This woman was in danger of believing that there was some other instrumentation that led to her faith—the tassels, for instance. It’s the tassels. You can just see it, the superstition developing, that it’s the tassels that save, right? Is it the tassels or is it Jesus? Jesus calls this woman out so that she understands that it is He who saves. Jesus saves her.

Let me talk to you about this man for a minute. Let me talk to you about him. Why in the world does Jesus tell the crowd that she’s asleep? He takes only three of the disciples in. He takes the mother and father in. They go into the inner room. And why does he do that?

I’ll tell you why I think he does that. I think He does that because the issue, the whole thing that this story is about, the central point of this story, is about Jairus and his faith. Will he embrace the promises and yield to the commandments, or will he not? I think that’s what we’re supposed to get when we get this story. In other words, we’re going to put all the crowds out. We’re going to use a metaphor for death. She’s just asleep. We’re going to bring in the family, and just the three disciples. And we’re going to press Jairus. Does he believe or does he not believe?

So it is interesting, isn’t it? There’s the crowd dynamic, and then there’s the narrowing down to the private dynamic.

*Some lessons for faith.* Let me run through these really quickly. And these are right from the text, and you can get others out of this.

*Fear drives out fear.* I’m sorry! That should be *faith*. *(Laughter)* Okay, we’ll call it *godly fear*.

**Participant:** Coward! *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** *Godly fear drives out fear when it looks to Christ.*

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** What does that mean, though? Well, when faith acts in obedience, whether “*yielding to the commands, trembling at the threatenings,*” or “*embracing the promises,*” you see, this is a treatment for anxiety, isn’t it? I mean, when you’re feeling anxious, what do you do? Well, go to the promises.

When you are struggling with sin, go to the promises of God. You know, the Puritans were great at this. Let me give you just one example. The Puritans were great at this stuff.

So here’s a promise. You’re struggling with sin. It feels like it’s huge in your life. You can’t overcome it. What do you do? You go to the Scriptures. “*She will bear a Son, and you will call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*” We always

## *“Some Lessons in Faith”*

think to ourselves, “Well, that’s eschatological. He’s finally going to save me from my sins.” No! No, no, no. In the struggle he’s going to save me from this sin! That’s a promise!

So you pray that. And you say, “Lord, You are here to save me from sin! This is a sin! I need to be saved from it! Save me from it!” You know, that sort of prayer is what you pray.

So it’s an application of “*yielding to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises.*” By the way, if you’re experiencing cowardice, it’s not a bad thing to go to Revelation 21:8 and read it, and tremble at it. Yes?

**Participant:** So Jeff, I think we all understand that we are saved from that sin, meaning that Christ has paid it all.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** We get that. However, it seems as though the power is still in us to want to commit those sins. So would you speak to that?

**Jeff:** Yes. Remember all the way back to the “Devoted to God” series. Do you remember the idea that there’s a white dog and a black dog within you, and both of them are warring, and the one you feed wins? And I said to you that that’s not a Biblical way to look at it. The Biblical way to look at it is that the black dog is dead. The white dog is living. Then if the black dog is dead, why do I feel what I feel? Because I’ve got a rotting corpse in me, right?

Now my job is to do what Scripture says and put what remains to death. But Scripture also says that what remains is dead. So what I need to do is to exercise the means of grace in order to clean up that which is in me.

So I need to pray. I need to go to the Scripture and use it. I need to go to church. I need to take Communion. I need to utilize the means of grace that God gives me in order to bring about a confirmation and a growth in my faith.

It’s sort of like this. Think about it. I think I might have mentioned this to you before. I’m not sure; forgive me if I’m repeating. Think about Sidney Crosby. Sidney Crosby is Sidney Crosby not because he worked hard at the rink, but because he’s a gifted hockey player. I mean he’s got some abilities with hand-eye coordination and speed and stability and skating that are just—you know, he’s gifted.

But Sidney Crosby is Sidney Crosby because he developed those gifts he was given. I have a friend of mine. I just saw his picture the other day. He’s probably 42 right now. And he looks great—thin waist, big arms, and stuff. And I remember talking to him. I said, “Wow, you have great genetic potential!”

He was strong. We would go to the gym and he would bench press 315 with only a couple of months of lifting. And I said, “Man, you really ought to develop that.”

And he said, “I’m just too lazy.” That’s what he said.

My point is that weak faith will not cultivate what Christ has given. And you’ll be like Weak Faith in *Pilgrim’s Progress*. You may be saved. But you’ll stumble along all the way.

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Here’s the problem, though. The problem is that sometimes weak faith looks like partial apostasy. And do you know how you know the difference between partial apostasy and full apostasy? Repentance.

So all of that sort of goes into the answer to that question. It’s a great question. But there’s so much there. Does that help, Brian? Okay good, I’m glad. (*Laughter*)

And then *faith drives out fear when it turns a blind eye to man*. In both cases both of these people had to stop looking around them and look to Christ. They had to yield to the obedience, tremble at the threatenings and embrace the promises. Okay, that’s all I have. Thanks a lot. Any questions? No? Do you have one?

” **Participant:** What is it that we fear as men in regard to whether or not we take action on it, in regard to whether we walk across the street to our neighbors, or being a witness, or taking a stand in our workplace?

**Second Participant:** Good question.

**Jeff:** What do we fear as men? Say that one more time.

**Participant:** What more could we be doing so we don’t live in fear?

**Jeff:** So you’re challenging. Yeah, yeah, yeah. A good challenge.

**Participant:** When you talked about accepting, receiving and resting, how would you define *receiving*? I know that in evangelistic circles there are some who would say that you have to do a physical act.

**Jeff:** Yes. I equate *receiving* with assent. So have I received it? In other words, do I assent to it? Do I give affirmation to what I know? Yes?

**Participant:** It just seems to me that the church in general today doesn’t tremble at the threatenings. If we don’t tremble at the threatenings as believers, how does that translate, what does that look like within the church and even within the individual?

**Jeff:** Yes. And I think that we don’t tremble at the threatenings because we have this idea that our culture has—that fear is a bad thing, right? We shouldn’t fear anything. That’s why we have this culture of fear because we’re trying to overcome it. We don’t realize that it all stems from fear of death, right? And we’re not going to get rid of it, because Jesus is the only One who took the problem. So what we’ve bought into as a church is the mindset of the culture.

You remember how we used to talk about our dads. Ooh, my dad!, you know? He would get after me and take me out into that woodshed. I feared my dad, you know? I feared him. I had that healthy respect for him. That’s the way we talk about our dads, right?

People don’t talk about their dads like that today. And as soon as you do with somebody younger, they’re like “Really? You feared your dad?” That’s what they think because of that good, healthy fear. And that’s why many in the church don’t know what godly fear is. They don’t know what to do with that.

**Participant:** It just strikes me that in all of my years I’ve never heard somebody from the pulpit talk or preach a sermon about godly fear.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** Is that strange, or am I just missing something here?

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**Jeff:** No, I think you're right. Godly fear. Well let me pray briefly with you men, and I'll let you go. Father in heaven, thank You for this day. We pray that You will bless it to us. We pray that You'll give us the faith that overcomes this cowardice. And we're thankful indeed that Jesus is the object of that faith, Lord, that He overcame, that we stand in Him as conquerors, more than conquerors. Lord, give us that in our experience. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)